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Letter dated 26 August 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the information contained in document A/67/884, entitled "Twentieth anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea", which was circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the agenda item on "Sustainable development" at the request of the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations.

In that connection, I have the honour to convey the comments of Tajikistan on the aforementioned document (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly under agenda item 20.

(*Signed*) Idibek **Kalandarov**
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Annex to the letter dated 26 August 2013 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Comments on the letter dated 5 June 2013, entitled "Twentieth anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea", from the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

As noted in the annex to the aforementioned letter, this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Over those twenty years, the Fund — an organization established through the efforts of all five States of the region — has served to substantially enhance international relations in the region, strengthen regional cooperation, resolve complex water management problems and improve ecological and socioeconomic conditions in the Aral Sea basin. In addition to providing a forum for dialogue and the achievement of consensus on the tasks entrusted to it, the Fund has also assisted in reaching difficult, yet mutually acceptable, decisions on complex issues of water usage and environmental protection in Central Asia.

Furthermore, over the past two decades the organization has developed specific rules and traditions aimed at building confidence, understanding, mutual respect and consideration of the interests of all the founding States of the Fund.

During its chairmanship of the Fund from 2002 to 2008, during which time the General Assembly adopted a resolution granting the Fund observer status in the Assembly, Tajikistan adopted a regional approach that harmonized the interests of all five founding States. We had hoped that, as the new chair of the Fund, Uzbekistan would follow that beneficial tradition, established over the course of twenty years of operation. However, that appears not to be the case, as certain points set out in the aforementioned letter are unfortunately contrary to the interests of several States members of the Fund.

Moreover, the document lists a number of causes of the Aral crisis but fails to mention the actual run-off losses, an objective indicator of water conservation. In 2011, a joint commission of the Aral Sea basin States analysed the channel losses in the Amudarya River — the largest river in Central Asia. The analysis showed that flow losses in the middle and lower reaches of the river had totalled 32 cubic kilometres (over 10 cubic kilometres per year) in the previous three years, a level threefold higher than the indicators in the Soviet period.

In view of the foregoing, the information presented in the annex to the aforementioned letter does not reflect the positions of all States members of the Fund and therefore cannot be deemed to do so.